## BROADCASTER

## La Porte police seek public's help in combating AC theft



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La Porte police have observed a significant increase in theft of copper wiring and air conditioning units, police said in a Friday report.

According to detectives, most thefts of this nature have taken place on the east side of La Porte. Because of this trend, police patrols have been increased in the affected areas and investigators are asking residents to keep an eye out for, and immediately report, suspicious persons lurking around unoccupied residences or businesses after hours.

While there have been a few incidents of air conditioner theft in other portions of the community, the primary area of concern for La Porte remains east of S.H. 146.

In addition to unattended residences and closed businesses, other areas commonly targeted have included rental properties and vacant homes for sale.

Typically, when an act of air conditioner theft occurs, a lone suspect has already been walking or driving around the area to research accessibility to AC units. Then, after a site is selected, thieves arrive in groups of two or three, whereupon the entire unit is generally disconnected and loaded into a truck bed.

Stolen AC units are later dismantled at another location, and then various parts and precious metals, such as copper and aluminum, are sold to area scrap yards for profit. Unfortunately, many parts do not have serial numbers and those that do are infrequently recorded by owners after installation.

Detectives urge residents to log the make, model, and serial number of all components related to exterior air conditioning units. Such proactive measures will help investigators in the recovery of your property should it be stolen.

To report suspicious activity, or if you have any information regarding possible suspects involved in local air conditioning thefts, contact the La Porte Police Department at 281-471-2141 or Crime Stoppers of Houston at 713-222-8477 or log onto their website at www.crime-stoppers.org.

If your tip leads to an arrest or the filing of felony charges in any case, you will be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$5,000. All calls and web-based entries submitted to Crime Stoppers will remain anonymous.